

## SGA officials denounce Treasurer's proposed fee amendment

Chris Van Buskirk, Beacon Staff

Student Government Association Executive Treasurer Abigail Semple's policy that would largely bar student organizations from charging participation fees, and remove a source of funding for several organizations, drew criticism from several SGA colleagues days prior to the vote.

The legislation, as an amendment to the SGA treasury handbook, would directly impact the way student organizations raise money via events that charge admission or submission fees. While Semple said the amendment aims to increase student access to organizational events, several of Semple's colleagues stated that they will not support the legislation because it does not protect organizations.

Three Financial Advisory Board members will consider the legislation on Thursday at a meeting in SGA's 172 Tremont St. office from 3 to 4 p.m. Voting members include Philip Leary, William Palauskas, and Joseph Augustus Johnson. Semple will not vote in Thursday's meeting.

Should the proposal pass during the FAB meeting, the substance of the legislation will go into effect immediately.

Prior to Thursday's FAB meeting, several prominent SGA officials disagreed with Semple's proposal to prohibit organizations from charging entry and submission fees.

Executive Vice President William Palauskas said he cannot support Semple's proposal as it does not align with his goal of supporting organizations on campus. Palauskas said he will vote against the legislation at Thursday's FAB meeting.

*See SGA, page 2*



## Emerson Skunks secure SGA affiliated status

By Domenic Conte • p. 8

The Emerson ultimate disc team, also known as the Emerson Skunks, was founded in 2015. • Greyson Acquaviva / Beacon Staff

## Junior's drum covers make noise on YouTube



Junior Alessandra Guarneri recently reached 13,800 subscribers on her drum cover YouTube channel. • Cho Yin Rachel Lo / Beacon Staff

Tatum Jenkins, Beacon Correspondent

When junior Alessandra Guarneri attended a Camila Cabello concert in 2016 at the Orpheum Theatre, two fans recognized her from the Fifth Harmony covers Guarneri used to post on YouTube.

"It was wild," Guarneri said. "I had never had that happen to me."

Her friend, junior Samantha Wiener, attended the concert with Guarneri and recalled how stunned she was.

"I was like, 'Did that just happen?'" Wiener

said. "And, after they walked away, it was no big deal. A couple different times we've been together when she's been recognized, and I'm always shocked, and she just stays super humble."

Guarneri started her Youtube channel, AlwaysAlessandra, playing song covers on the drums in 2014. Five years later, she has one hundred videos and 13,800 subscribers.

Guarneri's musical journey started in fourth grade when she joined her school band and volunteered to play the snare drum. She played this particular drum with the band until fifth grade

and in her high school's drumline for one year.

"I loved the fact that you could hold a beat and you could hear a beat so easily on the radio," she said. "I was enthralled with the fact that beats were in every song even if it was an orchestra song—you can feel the song."

Fourteen-year-old Guarneri decided to start her own YouTube channel after feeling inspired by drum cover accounts such as sincerelyilanaa on YouTube. The artist posted Fifth Harmony covers to her channel, and Guarneri was a big fan.

*See YouTube, page 6*

## Bright Lights to introduce film content warnings

Laurel Booth, Beacon Correspondent

The Bright Lights Film Series began posting content advisories on its website this fall to warn students about graphic and upsetting material in screenings.

Students responded to a survey last spring that asked them what kind of content they'd like to know about ahead of screenings.

The community feedback helped Bright Lights create the content advisory that allows people to check if upcoming films in the series contain distressing material.

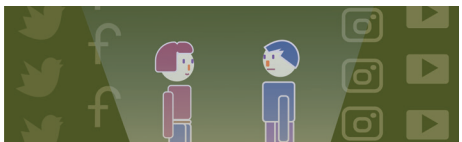
Anna Feder, the Director of Programming at Emerson's VMA department and curator of the Bright Lights film series, said that sexual assault and rape was the mostly highly requested topic to be covered under the new content advisory.

"If anyone goes to see a documentary like 'The Hunting Ground,' that's a film about sexual assault on campuses," Feder said in an interview. "Folks who go to that screening are relatively certain that that's going to be addressed. But at the same time, there's a film I'm showing where the female protagonist is in a car with somebody and it looks like it's going to be an assault scene. These are the kinds of things that I feel are good to let folks know about."

The content warnings fall under six categories: Drug use and drug-related violence; violence; bigotry; sexual assault and rape; harm to an elderly person, child, or animal; and mental illness and suicide.

*See Bright Lights, page 2*

## INSIDE THIS EDITION



Bringing online relationships into the real world can be difficult. **Pg. 5**



Emerson cross country heads in new direction under new coach. **Pg. 8**

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SGA sets election timeline, approves six positions

Andrew Brinker, *Beacon Correspondent*

The Student Government Association unanimously approved timelines for both the special elections and the general elections during their joint session meeting on Sept. 17.

The special elections, which are intended for students wishing to join SGA during the fall semester, will hold voting from 7 a.m. on Oct. 23 to 7 a.m. on Oct. 25. General election voting will run from Dec. 11 to Dec. 13.

Some of the current vacancies in the gov-

ernmental body include four unfilled executive board positions, several open senate seats, and an unoccupied presidential post for the class of 2020.

While the special election will attempt to add to the group’s membership, SGA also voted unanimously on Tuesday to appoint eight students to executive offices for the school year.

Of the new appointees, six will serve as commissioners including senior Gianna Girona as the Sustainability Commissioner, junior Harper McKenzie as the Accessibility Commissioner,

senior Tatiana Melendez as the Fraternity and Sorority Life Commissioner, junior Daniella Baltazar as the Honors Program Commissioner, freshman Lily Fitzherbert as the LGBTQIA+ Commissioner, and senior Caroline Rodriguez as the POWER Commissioner.

Additionally, freshman Jehan Wirasto and junior Nicole Poitras will occupy the Co-Executive Assistant and PR Chair Assistant positions respectively.

The new members will make up more than a third of SGA’s membership.

SGA President Raz Moayed expressed confidence in the appointees, citing their experience as a fruitful addition to the body.

“They have already been working on advertising who we are,” said Moayed. “They didn’t even need to be appointed. They’re already spewing information everywhere to every student.”

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Content warning system addresses student concerns

Continued from Page 1

Students can find which films scheduled to be included in the Bright Lights film series have been tagged with these warnings by clicking on the link at the bottom of the “Content Advisory” page.

Feder said she was motivated to make the change when she spoke with a student after an unexpected drug-related death appeared on screen.

“There was no indication this was going to be in the film at all, and then suddenly there it was and it was quite graphic,” Feder said. “Someone came up to me, very casually, and just said, ‘Hey, I lost someone recently to drug violence and this was content I would’ve wanted to know about.’”

Freshman Olivia Rettew experienced the issue firsthand after watching “IT Chapter Two” She said the opening scene showed homophobic views, something she wouldn’t have known about had she not seen reviews online.

“Sometimes going to screenings of movies you’ve never seen before, you don’t know what you’re getting into. There have been a lot of movies recently that don’t have warnings and should have,” Rettew said.

As for whether more content warnings will be added in the future, Feder says it’s still a work in progress.

“This is all based on the survey and feedback from the audience, and I will continue to adapt it with feedback from the audience,” Feder said.

“My sense is that any move in this direction, even if there’s an accidental omission here and there, is better than not having it at all.”

Feder said that, although the change will have little to no impact on most of the Bright Light series audience, the accessibility to this information could prove invaluable for some.

“It’s not about only serving the majority, it’s about trying to serve everybody,” Feder said. “I think for the folks who really need this information, they’re going to feel a lot more comfortable coming into the cinema.”

Sophomore Kat Carret said the inclusion of content warnings is a step in the right direction.

“There are lots of people who would appreciate that,” Carret said. “It’s a good thing that this information is readily available and not just a nasty surprise.”

Ultimately, Feder views the decision as additional dialogue being added to the constant discussion between Bright Lights and its viewers.

“The goal and value of this series is to create a space for film lovers to come together and create a community around cinema,” Feder said. “This is just another way to empower the audience so they feel like they’re coming into that space prepared, prepared for the content they’re going to engage with, prepared for the conversations that are going to happen, and to feel like this is a welcoming space.”

*“Sometimes going to screenings of movies you’ve never seen before, you don’t know what you’re getting into.”*

**- Olivia Rettew**

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Curator Anna Feder speaks at the Bright Lights film series. • Montse Landeros / Beacon Staff

SGA amendment endangers organization funding

Continued from Page 1

“I spoke to [SGA Executive President Raz Moayed] earlier today, and I think both of us share the sentiment that we think these ticket prices and different things really do help support organizations on campus, and it would be a real shame if it was taken away,” he said in a phone interview. “I think it really puts some pressure on [organizations] about how they’re going to get the money for those events and put on the projects that they work so hard to put on.”

Moayed said proposals that add barriers for students and organizations are not needed. While she said ensuring accessibility to events is a valid, moral, and a philosophical point, the lack of conversation between student organizations and SGA points to the likelihood that the proposal will not pass.

“Is there a way to compromise and negotiate and find a balance between what the student organizations and what our singular treasurer mentioned? Sure, but it hasn’t been voted in yet,” Moayed said in an interview. “At the end of the day, SGA’s number one goal is to make sure that students can get what they want in an effective, safe, productive manner.”

A student at the college with knowledge of Semple’s personal interactions with EVVYs’ staff told The Beacon that the SGA treasurer’s policy would hurt the EVVYs and other organizations that charge admission or submission fees.

“[The proposal] is directly targeting the EVVYs and the effect would not just hurt the EVVYs, but other organizations that use those admission and submission fees to finish off their funding,” the student said in an interview. “It works essentially as a topper and losing that funding is just enough that it becomes a problem for them.”

The student wished to remain unnamed out of fear of retaliation for their comments.

Semple confirmed that in a previous meeting with the leadership of the EVVYs she left the conversation feeling unwelcome in the organization, but declined to go into further detail. Semple told The Beacon that she does not hold a grudge against the EVVYs and that her policy proposal does not relate to any prior dealings with the organization.

“This has nothing to do with any personal biases,” she said in an interview. “I’m not taking shots at anybody. We are trying to say that students have a right to keep their dollars.”

EVVYs Executive Producer Rhegan Graham wrote in a statement to The Beacon that she cannot speak to Semple’s intention behind the proposal.

“The EVVYs has always felt supported by SGA and we are very grateful for that partnership,” she wrote.

Semple said the proposal is an attempt to protect the financial interests of students. She said students should not have to spend more to participate in organizational events when they are already paying the \$436 student activities fee each semester.

“It costs a lot to be a college student in downtown Boston,” she said in an interview. “This is an expensive place to live ... This is an expensive institution to attend.”

The proposal, Semple said, would bar organizations that receive money from SGA—either in the form of a semesterly appeal or yearly budget—from requiring students to pay a fee to participate in or submit content to their events.

This does not bar organizations from collecting charitable donations at their event on behalf of an outside organization or funds that would go into their institutional advancement fund—a bank account managed by the college and separate from SGA.

Additionally, an organization that does not receive a yearly budget from SGA can either choose between appealing for money from SGA’s student activities fee appeals account, or charging admission and submission fees. Organizations cannot engage in both forms of fundraising.

Semple said the EVVYs have historically appealed for approximately \$30,000 each year to help finance their awards show.

The proposal would not affect fraternity and sorority life dues, however, the organizations would fall into the category of groups that do not receive a yearly budget but can appeal for money from SGA. Similar to the EVVYs, FSL groups would either have to appeal for money or charge admission fees—one or the other.

Semple said shows run by performance organizations or the Musical Theatre Society would

also be barred from requiring students to pay entrance fees. The organizations could offer a suggested donation but entrance would be covered by the student activities fee.

“Any of our comedy troupes that charge an admittance of \$2, I think the idea of charging to attend it can be a barrier of entry, regardless of what that amount is, for some members of our undergraduate community,” she said. “It’s about protecting that financial interest.”

The proposal would affect organizations that put on events paid in part by submission and admission fees. The EVVYs, for example, charge \$20 for a regular ticket to their Gala event and the lowest price for a ticket to the Majestic Theatre event costs \$15. Students pay \$10 to submit content to the awards show—however, the organization offers promotions throughout the year that reduce the cost.

Graham said the organization understands that admission prices can be a barrier to entry for some students.

“We encourage students in that position to seek out the help of the Office of Student Success, who never fails to ensure Emersonians have the best student experience possible,” she wrote.

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# Editorial

## Abolishing admission fees could hurt student organizations

At the Student Government Association’s Financial Advisory Board meeting on Sept. 12, Executive Treasurer Abby Semple proposed a rule that would forbid student organizations from charging mandatory fees for events.

In a Beacon article published on Sept. 12, Semple said she feels “queasy” when organizations mandate students to pay anything beyond the student service fee included in tuition.

If the proposed addition to the Treasury Handbook receives a majority vote at the upcoming SGA meeting on the 19th, it would stop groups from charging required admission fees—for example, SGA-funded theatre troupes could not charge \$5 for a ticket to a performance they host.

Fraternities and sororities that sell tickets for formals could no longer do so, even if the money they raise goes entirely to charity. However, this does not prevent organizations from collecting suggested, non-required donations from students. Funds acquired via these donations must be put in the organization’s institutional fund.

Organizations like theatre groups that put extensive creative effort into putting on high-quality shows each semester would not be allowed to charge their audiences. As a community of artists, Emerson students should understand the value of paying to enjoy art and support artists. And in the case of student theatre, it isn’t even to pay the actors—but to ensure they can even put on their production in the first place.

The EVVYs do their part to honor the artists and students who do notable work throughout the year. In fact, it is one of the sole platforms to officially recognize the work students do on campus, and it employs a horde of students who learn by working before and during the show. Without funding from submission fees and gala tickets, it could not happen.

As students ourselves, we are aware that money is tight, and that continued tuition hikes do not help. We also know tuition will continue to grow in the years to come, and the reality of paying back our debts is nearing.

One of the most valuable uses of our tuition is its contribution to the existence of extracurricular organizations and financing their needs. For the 2019–20 academic year, students paid \$436 per semester to support the finances of on-campus organizations.

Sadly, the reality is that the sliver of our tuition reserved for organizations’ financial needs is simply not enough, and organizations understandably need to produce more revenue to cover their costs through admission fees.

Additionally, SGA proposed the idea without consulting organizations on campus, and this prevents these organizations from participating in the decision-making process. Even though the organization leaders understand this policy to some degree, it is important they are involved and have a say in policy changes.

We understand the sentiments behind this idea. There are certain organizations that make a sizable amount of money from application and admission fees, and SGA’s actions represent an attempt to balance the playing field. But the potential drawbacks from this action outweigh the positive effects.

We understand the motivation behind abolishing admission fees is to alleviate student financial stress and remove

e c o n o m i c barriers. But the fact of the matter remains that organizations depend on these admission fees. To abolish the fees and not provide an alternative means of funding is to threaten some organizations’ e x i s t e n c e s entirely.

This initiative as it stands will ultimately do more harm than good. The measure needs to include a proposed method for ensuring the continued future of the affected organizations, instead of just pulling a main source of funding and leaving them to figure out their future.

*Chris Van Buskirk did not edit this editorial.*

*This editorial was written solely by Managing Editor Abigail Hadfield, Opinion Editor Diti Kohli, and Deputy Opinion Editor Ziqi Wang without consultation from other staff members, and does not influence any stories. Op-Eds reflect the views of only their authors, not The Berkeley Beacon.*

## Editorial Cartoon

by the Editorial Board  
illustration by Ally Rzes



*Little Building’s newest resident has made himself at home.*

## Beacon Horoscopes

Written by Dasha German

*Which residence hall are you based on your sign?*

Paramount	2 Bolyston
Scorpio	Virgo
Aquarius	Pisces
Colonial	Piano Row
Capricorn	Taurus
Sagittarius	Leo
Little Building	Hemenway (RIP)
Gemini	Cancer
Aries	Libra

## Letters To The Editor

*If you want to respond to, or share an opinion about, an article in the Beacon, you can write a short letter to the editor. Email it to letters@berkeleybeacon.com. Please note that letters may be edited. Submissions for print must be shorter than 250 words.*

## The Berkeley Beacon

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# Opinion

## Students detail which icebreakers caught their attention

*Professors are sometimes guilty of overusing icebreakers in the intital days of a new semester to get to know their classes. But icebreakers don't always go over so well with students. We asked students to tell us about a way an Emerson professor or past teacher has opened up a new class that they've enjoyed or has inspired them.*



“To me, there’s nothing worse than walking into a new class and having each person state their name.” • *Illustration by Ally Rzes* / Beacon Staff

**Jess Ferguson**

*Ferguson is a freshman journalism major.*

In my first Discovering Journalism class with Paul Mihailidis, he started by having the class arrange themselves in a circle based on our birthday. Doing this pushed me to speak to the majority of the class, even if we were not necessarily having a complete conversation. Afterward, we all went in a circle and said our names, the most interesting thing about ourselves, and the most boring thing we do day-to-day. I told everyone I directed three student films during high school, and a boring fact about me is that every night, I look forward to vacuuming my dorm room—yes, it is true.

During the activity, I learned about students who went to the same high school as celebrities like Khalid and Adam Sandler, students who

could samba dance, students who could play three instruments, and even a student who enjoyed language-learning memes. While the beginning of class, when no one really knows each other, can be awkward and, at times, cringey, I enjoyed getting to know my classmates in this non-traditional way.

To me, there is nothing worse than walking into a new class and having each person state their name, major, and where they are from before the professor proceeds to read the syllabus. Sure, it’s a way to learn about your classmates on a surface level, but it does not foster genuine connections and allow for much discussion. On the other hand, after Mihailidis’ activity, I had a feeling the class would be more tight-knit for the rest of the semester.

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**Carlota Cano**

*Cano is a sophomore communications major.*

On the first day of my speech class last year at a community college in Miami, after we spent the first half-hour discussing the syllabus and formal public speaking, my professor spoke to the importance of being able to attract the audience’s attention. In order to demonstrate just how short our attention spans are, he made the class gather for an activity. He had us form a circle and said something like, “We are going to start in a clockwise manner, and each of you is going to state your first name, your major, and your favorite food.” He then began as an example. Next came the first student, who said his name was Robert, he was a computer science major, and he liked pizza. Then another. Three more students continued this same pattern. But just as the sixth student was going to begin, the professor cut in and asked the group to recall the first student’s name. There was nothing but blank stares and silence. No one could remember his first name.

The purpose of the activity was to recognize short attention spans. Our professor told us that we need to be able to effectively deliver our messages. I was amazed by this activity. I never thought such a simple exercise could bring such profound attention to the importance of listening and effectively delivering messages, all while defining the true purpose of our public speaking class.

Teachers should bring important themes from the course into their ice breaker activities and stray from the individual self-presentations. By mixing theory and practice, students can assimilate with the class and facilitate their success.

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**Jiaxuan “Jocelyn” Yang**

*Yang is a freshman jouranlism major.*

On my first day of college, I was sitting in the lecture-style classroom, looking at the new faces around me, and anxiously waiting for class—both nervous and excited. But as soon as Professor Mark Leccese started talking to us in Journalism 101, this unfamiliar feeling magically disappeared. Mark chatted with students to let everyone get to know each other. And he did this with everyone in the classroom.

He used a list of random questions that he would shout out for students. “Where are you from? What type of music do you listen to? What’s your favorite movie or show? What else do you do for fun?”

Mark’s answers not only met our curiosity but raised our interests in journalism. When we asked him “why journalism,” he paused for a second and said something like, “I’ve never thought about another career besides journalism.” In a sense, this is what journalism students wanted to hear and why we’re here to explore together with a shared interest. And for the second class, the stage turned into 33 of us. From Portland, Oregon to Portland, Maine, from raised in the city to growing up on the farm, from music to sports teams, each of us told our own stories in our ways. These stories were too good to miss, where interesting souls gathered and we shared inspirational thoughts.

By introducing ourselves beyond just our names and majors, I immediately felt like more a part of this class in just the first week of school. Establishing mutual trust and respect between the professor and students in the early days of class makes for the best icebreaker.

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## Relationships: Virtual versus reality

**Althea Champion**

*Champion is a freshman writing, literature, and publishing major and a Beacon correspondent.*

In an age where technology cannot be avoided and social anxiety is at an all-time high, the once-taboo idea of forming relationships with people online whom you’ve never met suddenly became normal.

Not only are people meeting others via the internet by their own volition, but it is increasingly encouraged. Students today hear, “Get on your college’s Facebook page,” “Join the Emerson Mafia,” or “Connect with people over Instagram.” Teens are thrust online to find friendships, throwing the old, aversion-to-strangers warning out the window.

I have always been relatively opposed to the idea of meeting people online—not for safety reasons, but because meeting people online brings with it a whole new world of anxiety-inducing expectations I do not enjoy. Some people might get a kick out of the few moments that prelude the first meeting with someone they have been talking to online, but I am not one of them.

I rather relish the joys of getting to know someone over time and acquiring a natural closeness by way of dorm conversations at 1 a.m., or over a cup of afternoon coffee at the Thinking Cup. However old-fashioned my predispositions may be, an undeniable fact of candid moments like these is that they are void of expectation.

Sherry Turkle, a professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, gave a Ted talk in 2012 titled “Connected, but alone?”

She discussed the richness of human relationships and how we “clean them up” with technology. Turkle claims immediate connection online sets people up to be isolated in reality. With solitude seldom presenting itself, we are no longer afforded a space to be separate and can no longer afford the opportunity to reach out and “form real attachments.” Instead we use other people “to support our fragile sense of self,” and consequently fail to form meaningful

relationships with people.

“It’s when we stumble or hesitate or lose our words that we reveal ourselves to each other,” Turkle said during the Ted talk. “And are therefore able to form real relationships.”

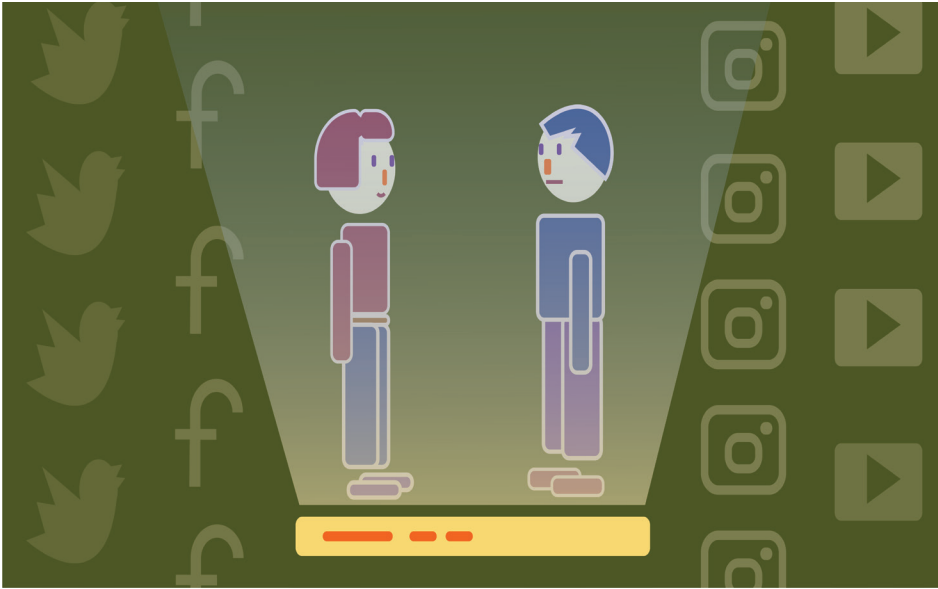
Nevertheless, come spring of my senior year of high school, I made the decision to join the Emerson Accepted Students Facebook page, among others, to help with the decision of choosing a college. I was hoping to better understand the vibe of the schools I was considering and the personalities of those who may be attending. If I met people along the way, so be it.

I made my introductory post, stating the kinds of things I liked to do and the type of music I listened to, and subsequently made my way through pages and pages of posts and comments from other students. I made no comments and only liked posts I shared commonalities with. By the end, I had successfully gotten an impression of the schools I was considering.

Much to my surprise, people, especially those on the Emerson page, were incredibly receptive. I was impressed by peoples’ willingness to put themselves out there. I ended up connecting with one girl who I really liked. We were both only children with single moms who loved Wes Anderson, Rex Orange County, and pizza. We had many things in common, and a few differences that allowed us to get along in a great way. We faceted once in March which only solidified our affinity for one another, and then decided to be each other’s roommates.

Needless to say, this was not the route I envisioned myself taking just a few months before. I was set on the idea of being randomly assigned a roommate, so as to avoid the aforementioned expectations and anxiety that come with selecting a roommate beforehand. Nevertheless, I really liked this girl and believed we would be excellent roommates. Why not try to circumvent the intolerable nervousness one feels in the weeks or months leading up to meeting your roommate?

However, due to complications with her enrollment, we did not end up rooming together this fall semester. I found myself without



“Meeting people online brings with it a whole new world of anxiety-inducing expectations I do not enjoy.” • *Illustration by Ally Rzes* / Beacon Staff

a roommate and defaulting to my previous plan: random assignment. Although I was disappointed to not be rooming with a girl I got along so well with, I felt a flood of relief coming over me, which was quickly followed by a twinge of guilt. I was finally free of the mountain of pressure I felt to be this girl’s best friend and the perfect roommate. Most people dreamed of finding a person online and connecting the way we did. I had that, and actually lost it. I should have been devastated, heartbroken, ranting about it to my mom and friends. But I just wasn’t.

I started to realize the reason behind my lack of disappointment was the very nature of our friendship. It had its roots in a virtual space, and solely existed there. Without any ties in the real world, how was I going to allow myself to invest my emotional stock into our situation? It simply never felt real. So when I received the message from her that we actually could not room together, I was not nearly affected as I

would be if our friendship had been rooted in reality.

My roommate now is a testament to that idea. After we received our housing assignment, we briefly chatted over Instagram, but come move-in day, we were virtually strangers. Over the course of our time here, exploring Boston, chatting candidly over dinners, and going to the movies with our other friends, we have grown so much closer, and doing so has proved to be an incredibly fun and valuable experience.

Of course, some virtual friendships do blossom into beautiful, physical friendships, and that is one of the many wonders of the technological world we are now living in. I have since met up with the girl I connected with online, and I adore her. But even so, I stand by my preference for the relationships I manifest in the real world versus the virtual world.

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# Living Arts

## Emerson alumna to release localized fiction podcast

Eloisa de Farias, *Beacon Correspondent*

When listening to children’s podcasts with her two kids, Danielle Monroe ‘12 decided to use a podcast as a new creative medium she could use to promote her writing and acting.

Monroe, a graduate of the master’s program in creative writing with an emphasis on fiction, releases her eight-part fiction series, “Republic of Camberville,” on Sept. 25. She wrote, produced, directed, and performed the series herself.

The eight standalone episodes follow a set of diverse characters who live in the town of Camberville—a combination of the cities of Cambridge and Somerville.

The podcast is available on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, SoundCloud, tuneIn, and Spotify, and each episode is around 15 to 40 minutes long.

“The series is very true to Somerville and Cambridge—they are all living very different lives even though they are all living in the same cities, which is appropriate because both cities are very diverse, but also very pocketed,” Monroe said. “People in East Somerville live very different lives than people in Davis Square, for example.”

Monroe began creating the podcast by looking through pieces she wrote for her creative writing senior thesis. Episode five, “Bombay Princess,” is one of the pieces from her thesis that ended up in “Republic of Camberville.”

“One of the really lovely things about doing this project is that I had these stories that I loved and that just weren’t working, but I was able to revisit some of these works and see them with completely fresh eyes,” Monroe said.

Monroe highlights themes of diversity through the characters and stories of “Republic

of Camberville.”

“My husband is from India and we talk a lot about culture and race, and in the Boston literature scene that was something that was always really missing and was something I really wanted to highlight with my work,” Monroe said.

Creating “Republic of Camberville” was Monroe’s first experience with producing a podcast.

“It’s such a huge emerging media form, so many people listen to podcasts and it’s really growing,” Monroe said. “This just seemed like something no one else was doing, and I really wanted to do something like that with my work.”

Voice actor Reshma Mehta, who voiced Mandira in “Bombay Princess,” said she believes the podcast format enhances the audience’s experience, because the tone and emotion can be lost through reading.

“I think that bringing voice to her stories is incredible, because she is going into a deep level bringing forward these subtleties and nuances of immigrants from different walks of life living in the United States, away from what they’re familiar with, in many of her stories,” Mehta said.

Voice actor Shahjehan Khan—featured in two episodes, “Salsaholico” and “What’s to Come”—found out about “Republic of Camberville” through an audition website called Backstage.

“The podcast is a unique approach,” Khan said. “[Monroe] has thought carefully about the characters, and I’m excited to see how the rest of the series turns out.”

All of the episodes are narrated by Massachusetts locals, in addition to Monroe’s participation in seven of the episodes.

“It’s cool that it’s focused on the Boston



Danielle Monroe ‘12 records her fictional podcast that follows characters in a utopian town • *Courtesy of Danielle Monroe*

area,” Khan said. “It’s a good opportunity for local talent.”

Monroe funded “Republic of Camberville” on her own through working various side jobs and taking from her savings. Monroe said each episode costs around \$400-\$600 to produce.

“All of the actors were paid,” Monroe said. “It was very important to me that I spent money supporting other local artists—almost all actors were from the Somerville and Cambridge area.”

Monroe not only wrote, produced, and performed “Republic of Camberville”—she also edited and mixed the podcast herself in addition to playing the clave, a musical instrument.

“In ‘Salsaholico’ it was completely me mixing it and finding the music,” Monroe said. “There’s three salsa songs, and two of them

have a clave, but the actual song didn’t, so it’s actually me playing the clave and mixing it into the song.”

After the debut of “Republic of Camberville,” Monroe will host a reading and performance of the podcast at the FULLer CUP cafe and attend the only podcast festival dedicated to fiction in the U.S., Podtales.

“I have never done anything like this before, so this will be a really big experiment,” Monroe said. “It’s gone really well and I hope to continue to do it.”

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## Alessandra Guarneri drums up YouTube success

*Continued from page 1*

“I wanted to track my progress,” Guarneri said. “I wanted people to give me feedback, I wanted to communicate with other drummers and musicians in the YouTube world, and it just all came together after that.”

Guarneri says she is proud of her growing YouTube channel and the recognition she’s received from it. Justin Bieber’s former lead guitarist Dan Kanter, singer Jacob Whitesides, and Camila Cabello’s manager Roger Gold all watched and praised her covers.

Additionally, Glamour Magazine featured her in a video where Hailee Steinfeld reacted to fans covering her songs. Guarneri said that people still recognize her from that video.

Wiener discovered Guarneri’s channel when they met as freshmen.

“One of the most notable features of her success for me is the fact that we’re so young, and not everybody goes to college and is actively working in the field they want to work in,” Wiener said.

When Guarneri records videos for her channel in the basement studio of her home in New Jersey, she always begins with a few warm-up songs before moving into the song she plans to post.

Guarneri said the process of creating the covers varies depending on the song choice. Some songs require more practice than others depending on the complexity of the song’s bridge, time signature, and pace.

“A basic pop track is going to sound the same when it comes to drums from start to finish most likely,” Guarneri said. “If you get a track that’s more difficult, where they broke it up and the production is more advanced, it’s going to take longer to really realize the bridge has a different beat or it’s cut into a different time signature.”

After she records her final take, Guarneri edits the video, matching up the sound captured from the overhead microphone with the actual



Junior Alessandra Guarneri’s drum cover YouTube channel has been praised by music industry professionals • *Courtesy of Nicole McGovern*

footage.

“[It could] be me messing around with milliseconds for 45 minutes, or I get it right the first time,” Guarneri said. “The editing is different every time.”

Guarneri said that, while this is her typical process, from the start of filming to the end of editing, creating a video can take anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour and a half.

Guarneri said her dedication to her channel paid off when her cover of Camila Cabello’s “Havana” reached 97,000 views. She said this

cover was her hardest to nail down—she uploaded her cover the same day “Havana” was released, learning and editing it all in a matter of hours.

“The response was great and I just remember it all being worth it as soon as all the views and comments started pouring in,” she said.

Guarneri said her work goes beyond simply making the videos. She watches live performances of drummers to pick up differences in drumming styles between recordings and live tracks. Guarneri also said she goes to a lot of

concerts, allowing her to observe various performance styles and listen to different types of music.

Junior Marquelle Bell, a friend of Guarneri, noticed how carefully Guarneri refines her performances, which allows her to enjoy playing more.

“Something that stands out when I watch her play in her videos is the pure enjoyment I can see on her face while playing,” Bell said. “Like you can genuinely tell she’s into what she plays and she creates her own authentic rhythm, and I can only respect her for it.”

Despite her drumming expertise, Guarneri said some male viewers act surprised by her skill and make remarks such as “I didn’t know women could drum!” Despite the commenters believing the comments are flattering, Guarneri said she finds them offensive.

“We’re moving toward a better direction, but [the drumming scene] is not where it needs to be,” Guarneri said. “So me seeing those comments is me seeing that it’s not where it should be. But the rest of the comments show me it’s moving toward a better direction.”

Guarneri said these remarks motivate her to continue to post on her channel and break stereotypes around what drummers should look like.

She said she ultimately hopes to shift the conversation around drumming and deconstruct the idea of gendered activities.

“I definitely want to convey that message that people can do anything they want,” Guarneri said. “It’s not even just girls playing drums, a guy wants to be an ice skater or a girl wants to skateboard or whatever the case is. There shouldn’t be gendered activities and I don’t like reading comments that say, ‘Wow, girls can drum!’”

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Snoozer wakes up local music scene with punk album

J. Faith Malicdem, *Beacon Correspondent*

James Ammirato knew the Boston music scene is its own little microcosm of the city, and because of that, it’s really hard to be heard.

According to student punk rock band Snoozer, Boston’s up-and-coming music scene is caught in a flurry of new-wave scruffy bedroom pop and grainy low-fi jazz, in contrast to their distinct sound featured on their debut album, *Tortoise, Hare*.

The band is composed of junior singer-songwriter and guitarist James Ammirato, junior bassist Ian Downie, and Boston University junior and drummer Brendan Dunphy.

Dunphy said releasing *Tortoise, Hare* helped the band make a name for itself by introducing their own style of “running-with-scissors” punk music.

The three students formed Snoozer when Downie and Ammirato started to look into living off campus after their freshman year. They met Dunphy at a mutual friend’s birthday dinner, eventually exchanging numbers and deciding to play music together.

“I’m not really looking to be like, famous or anything,” Ammirato said in an interview. “It would be cool to get recognition, it was super cool that [The Beacon] reached out to me. I had no idea that anyone heard about it.”

After being together for a year and a half, the band members spent time collaborating on song ideas—pouring their hearts and souls into making a full-length, quality album. Ammirato

said he spearheaded the production and release of *Tortoise, Hare*.

“[The album name] really isn’t that deep, it’s kind of an inside joke that I have with my bandmates,” Ammirato said. “We realized halfway through the recording that half of the songs are really fast, and half of them are really slow. Brendan and Ian were like, ‘James, you are incapable of writing mid-tempo songs.’ So, tortoise: hare. Slow: fast.”

Downie said the band’s name stems from Ammirato and Downie’s sleeping schedules, or lack thereof.

“James basically didn’t have a sleeping schedule freshman year,” Downie said in an interview. “He would sleep in two-hour increments four or five times a day. He has a remarkable ability to fall asleep anywhere, as long as he’s sitting down, he can just knock out. Both of our lives were characterized by time not being real. So, that’s where Snoozer’s name comes from.”

Ammirato found that after meeting Downie and Dunphy, jam and writing sessions turned out to be more fun. “[My music] was really Elliot Smith-y, like, singer-songwriter, sad boy shit. I wanted to be making loud, electric guitar music,” Ammirato said. “[Writing solo] was a lot less collaborative and less fun as a result, it was just kind of like, ‘oh let’s get this product’ instead of, ‘oh let’s make music,’ so it’s a lot more fun having a band with your friends.”

Downie said the album itself is more of a compilation of songs Ammirato had worked on over a period of time, rather than a consistent project that had been planned out. Ammirato said it took three months for the band to nail down the tracks in a studio.

Ammirato reached out to his long-time friend and guitar teacher Jesse Trepiak, who works at the YMCA in Newton, about needing a place to record new songs.

Dunphy recounted his experience recording at the YMCA. “I took the D Line out to Riverside,” Dunphy said. “[Downie] picked me up from there. We drove to the YMCA, walked amongst a bunch of kindergarteners down to the basement, and then recorded an album.”

The process consisted of three recording sessions total, the initial session focusing on laying down the drum tracks, and the later sessions highlighting bass, guitar and vocals. The format of the studio and recording session allowed the three to communicate with one another while recording the music.

Will Goldsmith, a student at Newton North High School interning with Trepiak, did most of the mixing and mastering in the album’s post-production. Ammirato said he took it upon himself to get *Tortoise, Hare* on streaming services using the distribution company Distrokid, which streams one’s music on every streaming platform.

Ammirato advised aspiring musicians on entering the music industry to take chances. “Be really open to any collaboration that people throw out to you,” Ammirato said. “A lot of people are really hesitant to collaborate with people they don’t know, or people that make music that they aren’t open to. But you’d be really surprised at what can come of a seemingly very oppositional relationship between two artists.”

Dunphy said he hopes audiences will give the album a listen. “People can listen to the album if they want,” Dunphy said. “It’s their own prerogative. Why not listen? It’s a nice album. That’s just me. Who am I to say? I’m just a guy. I think it’s worth listening to.”

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Student band Snoozer described their first album, *Tortoise, Hare* as “running-with-scissors” style punk rock. • Kyle Bray / *Beacon Staff*

“[My music] was really Elliot Smith-y, like, singer-songwriter, sad boy shit. I wanted to be making loud, electric guitar music.”

-James Ammirato

“We drove to the YMCA, walked amongst a bunch of kindergarteners down to the basement, and then recorded an album.”

-Brendan Dunphy

Age of the Twink: The queer politics of the mushroom kingdom



Kyle Labe is a senior writing, literature, and publishing major, the Beacon’s chief copy editor, and LGBTQ+ columnist.

When it comes to a “Super Mario” game, I’ll always choose Princess Peach as my avatar. If it’s “Resident Evil,” I’ll go for Ada Wong. I prefer Ms. Pac Man over her boring male counterpart. For Super Smash Bros., I frequent Samus.

A 2013 study in the journal “Information, Communication & Society” found that men are 23 percent more likely to gender-swap in video games than women. The explanation for this phenomenon? The author claims that men “prefer the esthetics of watching a female avatar form,” meaning, in a third-person role-playing game, they like to watch a female character’s butt.

How the male gaze transfers onto the animated female form is just one of many disappointing factors of this phenomenon. Some men desire to “control” the woman, while others view female characters as weaker and simpler to master—like an “easy mode,” but for the gender divide.

While these explanations suit a patriarchal, often heterosexist viewpoint of the video-gaming audience, they fail to consider the many gay men who choose female avatars. If so many straight men choose female characters to represent them in the digital sphere, there are just as many—if not more—gay men who fall into the same habit, according to Cyber Psychology.

I am not a gamer, and I don’t claim to be. Yet I would be lying to myself if I did not admit

that female characters, in all forms of media—literature, films, television shows, and video games—shaped my development and impacted my identity as a queer youth. I can still recall friends mocking me when, at their homes, I would indubitably and reflexively select “girly” characters like Chun-Li in “Street Fighter,” or the snide comments from my father when we played “The Legend of Zelda” and I’d fawn over the enigmatic, usually silenced princess.

According to Dr. Catherine Flick, senior lecturer at De Montfort University, the gay man’s wont to identify with a female character largely relies on a sexual basis. Because there are scarcely any queer characters in video games, we must depend on the woman to live out our fantasies of romancing with men. In video games, pretending to be a woman provides us the opportunity to form the same connections with men that, in the real world, could result in harassment and bigotry. Video games can’t judge us for wanting to be with the same sex.

Flick also alleges gay men often find solace in the strong, yet over-sexualized woman. When one peruses any article denoting the most famous female characters in video game history, or any catalog of available avatars from which to select in a game, or any online message board—where male fans share their “art” in the form of a caricature of the female body, where breasts, hips, and lips are swollen and

bulging—it is not a challenge to realize how severely male-dominated the industry is and how these results of human imagination often objectify women.

Yet what is the critical eye to make of characters such as Samus from “Metroid,” or Lara Croft from “Tomb Raider,” or Yuna from “Final Fantasy?” In other words, what am I, the gay man, supposed to make of my identification with such overt male fantasies?

It was something I didn’t comprehend when I was younger—when my libido was so repressed as to believe I lacked one—yet I understand it quite well now. The female characters I looked up to, even aspired to be like, were powerful. They were powerful and over-sexualized, as if female power relies on sex. They would manipulate the male gaze—the camera’s lingering shot on their behind as they crawled through a tunnel, or the too-detailed jiggling of their chest as if women with mystical powers and superhero abilities know nothing about bras—by reclaiming their narrative. They would transform into something to fear, something that could destroy and, in some cases, humiliate their (often male) enemy.

For me, a gay kid ridiculed for my “abnormal” sexual orientation, that idea had quite an appeal: that I could turn what was used against me into something powerful and mighty. But queer identity is not the same as sexual

identity, and the gay man’s identification with women—extending into the real world, as well, with the popularity of female pop stars and Hollywood actresses in the community—is much more nuanced and human.

I remember playing “Final Fantasy X-2,” the installment in the role-playing series that focuses its narration and storyline on the experiences of three women trekking its fantastical world. I was obsessed. So obsessed, in fact, that I nearly begged my parents to gift me its action figures, crafted and shipped cross-continently, for Christmas. For the first time, I was exposed to the power and force of sisterhood—in video games, if one is lucky enough to have a playable woman, she is normally isolated and self-dependent. It was something I longed to have: a bond not based upon, but lifted up by a shared, marginalized identity.

In the HBO show Looking, one of its male characters creates a video game with zero playable women, to which his gay employee swiftly protests. “Women are the outsiders in games,” he says. “And I relate to that. Gay people get it.”

As a man, I don’t aim to stake my privilege where it doesn’t belong, but maybe there is truth in why I, along with countless other gay men, find solace, comfort, and even support in female characters. Because like us, women, as much in the digital world as in reality, are underestimated and ostracized, and we long to show our worth and strength. To prove ourselves. To rise up to the occasion. To not only join, but play the game.

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# Sports

## UPCOMING ACTION

**WOMEN’S VOLLEYBALL:** Emerson at Coast Guard, 12 p.m., Sat.

**WOMEN’S SOCCER:** Mount Holyoke at Emerson, 1 p.m., Sat.

**MEN’S SOCCER:** Emerson at Clark, 1 p.m., Sat.

**CROSS COUNTRY:** Pop Crowell Invitational, Sat.

## Emerson Skunks earn school affiliated org status

Domenic Conte, *Beacon Staff*

Senior captain Kate Nelson of the Emerson Skunks, the school’s ultimate disc program, remembers the rough times of traveling to tournaments with the team during her first season three years ago.

“My freshman year, we slept on the floor of a frat house in Saratoga,” Nelson said. “A guy on our team knew a guy who knew a guy who let us sleep on his floor. The people who owned the house came home at 2 a.m. and we were just covering their floor. It’s not what you want to be doing.”

Finding ideal sleeping accommodations stood as just one of the challenges the Skunks faced since their inception in 2015. Those days are now over for the team, who this season gained school funding and became the only Emerson affiliated organization to compete athletically.

“We’re like a name in the ultimate community, people know us now,” Nelson said. “We go to tournaments, we’ve won money. We don’t really have to reach out to tournaments anymore, they just email us and ask us to come to their tournament.”

Beginning last semester, Nelson and junior co-captain Cam Barth worked with the Office of Student Engagement and Leadership to apply for an affiliation with the school.

Organizations normally apply for an affiliated status in the spring, but as an athletic program, the Skunks needed to fill out additional health waivers and forms that prevented them from earning a probationary affiliate status until two weeks before the start of the fall semester.

In addition to being able to provide hotel space for players, the Skunks can supply uniforms and cleats, appear at Emerson’s Organization fair, rent vehicles for tournaments, and search for a coach.

“Years ago we were shoving people in the back of our cars, renting two cars and putting someone in the trunk,” Nelson said. “Now we’re going to have car space and make sure everyone is comfortable and safe.”

The Skunks practice four days a week for two hours and compete in tournaments on the weekends which can last either one day or multiple nights.

In past years, the Skunks have paid for their



Emerson Skunk team members watch senior Elvis Chen jump to catch a frisbee.  
Greyson Acquaviva / *Beacon Staff*

equipment and transportation out of pocket and through GoFundMe donations. Nelson said school funding provides a more stable financial source and avoids obstacles they are familiar with.

“I don’t want to have an organization that relies on donations, because they could totally fluctuate,” Nelson said. “Funding is going to change the game because I would feel terrible if someone wanted to join the team but didn’t have the money to come to a tournament or pay for gear.”

Andy Donahue, the assistant director of Student Engagement and Leadership, said he and Jason Meier, the director of Student Engagement and Leadership, met with the Office of General Counsel and Director of Treasury Services to ensure the school was ready to have its first affiliated competitive athletic organization.

Donahue said the leaders of the Skunks succeeded in their pursuit because of their selfless dedication to the future of the team.

“Some of the best leaders we have are most motivated to make things better for more than just themselves,” Donahue said. “[Nelson] and

[Barth] want to see Ultimate take off because it supports so many students. They were really motivated not to do this for themselves, but to do it for the organization, become an affiliated group, be at the org fair, and plant their flag on campus.”

The Skunks received 107 emails while stationed at the org fair on Sept. 6. Nelson said being at the org fair increased the strength of their recruiting and attracted more players.

“The biggest difference for me was just being able to be at the org fair,” Nelson said. “We weren’t able to be there before in the years past, so we would be standing outside yelling at people to come, which we would get in trouble for. Since we were at the org fair we were able to meet a lot of different people.”

Sophomore and junior-captain Max Murphy said the team’s presence at the org fair boosts its chances of finding skilled players and becoming a more competitive team.

“It’s nice to be at the org fair because we had more of an opportunity to find new players and find new talent,” Murphy said. “We want to have fun, but we also want to have the best team

possible. When we weren’t recognized, people didn’t even know we existed, but now they do.”

Last year, the team brought in 40 new players for its first scrimmage in the fall and retained seven of them for the year. This year Nelson expects well over ten players to stick around and participate throughout the season.

“We’ve had a big turnout,” Nelson said. “Every practice we have more new faces. People just keep pulling up.”

With funding, Nelson said the Skunks can explore coaching candidates. Nelson and Barth have served as coaches for the team in recent seasons, but Nelson said they will benefit as an organization by having a coach in place by the time she leaves Emerson.

“We actually had offers from five people who want to coach us without even knowing our budget,” Nelson said. “I think the ultimate community just wants to help each other out and maintain a community as we grow. It won’t be hard to find a coach, it’ll just be hard to make sure they’re getting paid well through the school.”

The Skunks invite students with any interest to join the team, which is open to players of all genders. Nelson said the team thrives on diversity, inclusivity, and positivity while offering an athletic opportunity without the demands and commitments of a varsity team.

“Ultimate is highly competitive, and it also really encourages positive competition,” Nelson said. “Oftentimes in varsity college sports, the importance of being a good human is kind of lost. When you’re playing ultimate, you have to remember to be a positive player.”

Raz Moayed, the Student Government Association executive president, said the best part about the Skunks is their ability to bring competitiveness to a fun environment.

“I love everything they stand for,” Moayed said. “If you want that athleticism in your life that is not as strict as Division III, go to them. They just sell everyone on the fact that at the end of the day they are a group of friends.”

*Sports Editor Aaron J. Miller did not edit this story due to a conflict of interest.*

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## New coach implements changes to cross country teams

Ethan McDowell, *Beacon Staff*

For the first time in 21 years, the cross country team is running under new leadership.

Brandon Fox ‘11, the new head coach of the Lions, served as an assistant under former head coach John Furey for the past seven seasons, after running for the team from 2008-11.

“I don’t have [Furey]’s presence anymore, and that’s kind of strange,” Fox said. “It was kind of weird pulling away from Piano Row last weekend for our first meet and he wasn’t there. He put me in a good spot coaching-wise, because he’s very loved and respected by the alumni here at Emerson and the greater Boston running community as a whole.”

Since gaining control of the program, Fox worked to change the culture of the team.

“There were some things that needed to be changed,” Fox said. “I felt like the team wasn’t being as accountable as they should have been. They needed a reminder that this is a [Division III] program, and we need to step our competition level up. Our leadership needs to step up a little bit.”

Fox said juniors Joey MacNeil, Maddie Lynch, and Taylor Ranney have emerged as leaders.

“I’m excited for what they’re going to bring for the next couple of years here,” Fox said. “They’re great captains, and the team is off to a really good start under their leadership.”

As captains, MacNeil and Ranney adjusted how they lead the team to Fox’s coaching style. Ranney said the team organizes pasta parties every Friday to help with team chemistry.

“Our last coach was a really sweet guy, and Fox is a little more serious,” Ranney said. “I

think this year the captains are bringing more of a fun aspect to it as well because last year the coach was more fun and we were trying to be more serious.”

As a sophomore in 2018, MacNeil said he did not have the opportunity to mentor younger players since the team had no freshman. He said this year he became more of a role model for the freshmen.

Fox said the most prominent issue that needed to be fixed going into the season was a lack of offseason training.

“[Cross Country] is not just a physical sport,” Fox said. “It’s emotional [and] it’s mental. When they don’t train in the summer, you don’t have any of it.”

MacNeil and Ranney said the team came into the season in better shape compared to past years, which Fox also noticed.

“We were ready to go from day one. That’s a huge start,” Fox said.

Fox said he used the team’s extra preparation as an opportunity to turn up the intensity of training.

“It’s been weird doing actual workouts I hadn’t done since high school,” MacNeil said. “It’s been kicking my ass, but it’s good for all of us.”

Thanks to the extra training, the team hit the ground running.

In their first meet of the season, freshman Oliver Glass placed fifth in the race, and the Lions completed the race with two other top-30 finishers in a field of 84 runners. The women also boasted four top-20 finishes in a race with 80 athletes competing. This included a 10th place finish from Ranney. The individual scores totaled up resulted in an eighth place finish out



The women’s and men’s cross country teams race Saturday at the Pop Crowell Invitational.  
Photo courtesy of Phillipe Legagneur

of 10 teams for the men, and a fifth place out of seven teams for the women.

“Last year we were last on both sides with a considerable gap in between us and the next team,” Fox said. “Right now, both our teams are competing. That’s a strong signal to me that we’re in the right direction.”

The Lions will race in five more meets and will compete for a championship in the New England Women’s and Men’s Athletic Conference. MacNeil said he considers the NEWMAC to be one of the toughest conferences for cross country in Division III, yet he is still optimistic.

“I think we’re gonna have a chance to real-

ly give a couple teams a run and surprise some teams,” MacNeil said.

The Lions get back in action on Sept. 21 when they travel to Gordon College to compete in the Pop Crowell Invitational.

*Copy Managing Editor Abigail Hadfield did not edit this story due to a conflict of interest.*

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